

CHILDREN & FAMILIES COMMISSION OF FRESNO COUNTY

**Regular Meeting
January 9, 2002 - 3:00 p.m.**

**Children & Families Commission Offices
University of California Building
550 E. Shaw, Suite 215
Fresno, CA**

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1

Recommendations:

Approve Commission Minutes – December 5, 2001 Regular Meeting

MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 5, 2001 MEETING

Present: Chair Bob Waterston, Secretary/Treasurer Gary Carozza, Commissioners Marion Karian, Roseanne Lascano, Kathleen McIntyre, LeeAnn Parry; Oscar Sablan, Executive Director Steve Gordon; Commission Counsel Holley Perez

Absent: Vice Chair Luisa Medina (excused)

Commissioner Waterston called the meeting to order at 3:08 p.m.; a quorum was established.

1. Approval of Minutes – November 7, 2001 meeting

Commissioner Sablan (Carozza second) moved approval of the minutes as presented. Motion approved unanimously.

Commission Waterston recessed the regular meeting and opened the Public Hearing on the 2001-2002 Annual Program Report and Audit.

2. PUBLIC HEARING – Annual Program Report and Financial Audit for Fiscal Year 2000-2001

No comments were made.

Commissioner Waterston closed the Public Hearing on the Annual Report and Audit and reopened the regular meeting.

3. Approve Commission's Annual Program Report and Financial Audit for fiscal year 2000-2001 to send to State Commission

Accountant Lyn Higginson explained the process required by the State Commission regarding annual reporting and audit. She stated the required state report was submitted in draft form by Oct. 15 to the State and to the Fresno County Board of Supervisors for review and comment on November 27, 2001, as required by Fresno County Ordinance 98-017 (Rev. 99-012). Staff recommendation is for approval to forward the program report and financial audit to the State Children and Families Commission as required by the Children and Families Act.

Commissioner Carozza asked whether the findings in the audit management letter had been addressed; Higginson replied all the suggestions have been implemented.

Commissioner Carozza (Lascano second) moved approval to forward the annual report and financial audit to the California Children and Families Commission to meet the requirements of the Children and Families Act. Motion approved unanimously.

4. Receive Financial Report for October 2001

Higginson presented for review the financial report for the month ending October 31, 2001.

Discussion: Commissioner Carozza questioned the line item for Revenues being at 404% of budget; Higginson explained that the revenue category was originally under budgeted, specifically for interest income, and budget modifications are needed to adjust those figures.

Commissioner Carozza (Lascano second) moved to accept the financial report for October 31, 2001 as presented. Motion approved unanimously.

5. Approve new funding for Mini-Grant program and revised program criteria.

Executive Director Gordon reviewed the 2001 program, stating that there was an overwhelming need for the program as well as response from the community for the program. From the "lessons learned" in the 2001 program, a revised, and hopefully improved, program for 2002 being presented for Commissioners' approval.

Program Operations Coordinator Kendra Rogers reviewed the 2001 mini-grant program, where \$100,000 was originally budgeted, and grants totaling approximately \$175,000 were ultimately awarded. Even with the success of this program, problems arose with the application process being somewhat foreign to home childcare providers, who ended up being the largest category of ultimate grant recipients. With the lessons learned from the 2001, program, staff is recommending two separate Mini-Grant Programs, a "general" program and one specifically for child care providers (CCP).

Guidelines for General Mini-Grant Program:

- Total amount to be budgeted: \$150,000
- Maximum amount of individual grants = \$5,000
- Same guidelines as 2001 program, except applications will be due every six months (June and December) rather than monthly
- Open to any agency and/or organization serving children 0-5 and/or their families in Fresno County are eligible to apply with the exception of childcare providers.

Guidelines for Child Care Provider Mini-Grant Program:

- Total amount to be budgeted: \$210,000 (\$200,000 for direct grants; \$10,000 for quality improvement workshops)
- Maximum amount of individual grants = \$2,000
- Program to run for calendar year 2002, with money allocated from 2001-02 budget
- Only licensed day care providers may apply
- Providers serving special needs children may request up to \$1,000 in additional funding for specialized equipment for those children; a statement showing how the equipment will benefit a particular child in their care will also be required.
- Providers may apply under one or more of five (5) separate categories of funding, with total not to exceed the \$2,000 maximum:
 - Initial start-up (after license is obtained)
 - Increase capacity (those wanting to increase from small to large size day care)
 - Upgrade or expand outdoor equipment
 - Upgrade or expand indoor equipment and/or curriculum/curriculum materials
 - Minor repairs and/or replacements
- To ensure quality improvement in child care, interested CCPs will be required to attend a 2-hour workshop on the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) (for classroom) or the Family Day Care Rating Scale (FDCRS) (for family child care homes) and then complete the self-assessment instrument accompanying this program. Completion of this tool will familiarize providers with the indicators of

program quality and how to use the tool for self-assessment. Trainings will be conducted bi-monthly and in both urban and rural settings, and in both Spanish and English.

- Grant applicants will be required to submit a self-assessment from ECERS/FDCRS with their grant application
- Attendance at one application workshop will be required of applicants. These will be held monthly and conducted in both urban and rural areas.
- Applications require submission of a budget and descriptive program narrative.

All applications (General and CCP) will be reviewed by Commission staff for completeness and then forwarded to a review panel composed of members from the community with expertise in childcare. Applications will be reviewed based on the need for the project, relevance to the Commission's objectives, project description, and the expected impact of the project. Priority will be given to rural providers, first-time applicants, and providers serving (a) children 0-18 months of age; (b) culturally and linguistically diverse children and/or (c) children with special needs. Extensive outreach in the rural areas will be done in an effort to increase participation from rural childcare providers.

Staff is requesting Commission approval for the new guidelines and a total of \$360,000 be allocated to the Mini-Grant program. Once the guidelines are approved, the actual application will be brought to the Commission for approval.

Discussion: Commissioner Parry stated she had a concern that the five areas of the grant application do not include staff training and development. Rogers responded that staff had considered that, but since the C.A.R.E.S program was about to be launched, with Commission moneys included, it was felt there was a separate mechanism in place to address this area. Commissioner Parry asked for assurances that grant recipients of this program would also access the C.A.R.E.S. program. Rogers said further work could be done to make the two programs coincide, but she was not sure how participation in one program could be made a requirement of the other. Commissioner Parry said she would like to see the specific integration of these two programs somehow or that the concepts were thoroughly integrated. Director Gordon offered that he has been working with a group through West Ed that offers free training to CCPs for infants and toddlers.

Commissioners McIntyre and Carozza asked that some type of training component be a requirement of the Mini-Grant program. Rogers responded that that might be possible, but the C.A.R.E.S. project is set up as an application process so that there is the possibility that they might be approved for a Mini-Grant and not approved for the C.A.R.E.S. project. Carozza said he wanted to make sure that the programs the Commission funds will improve the quality of care, and said he would like to see the two programs tied together. Director Gordon stated that one of the major problems in training CCPs is the time. The Commission has discussed allocating moneys to provide for substitute teachers for "pull out" training programs that are an avenue for potential funding. Carozza felt that we needed to concentrate on the enrichment side of childcare, not simply the baby-sitting aspect. Rogers said that was part of the thought process that went in to deciding to include the ECERS/FDCRS that focuses on the components of quality childcare. Carozza stated he wanted to see Commission funds going toward building capacity with the highest quality providers possible. Commissioner Parry said she felt that professionalism needed to be encouraged and there needed to be a willingness to fund training opportunities, transportation to training, reimbursement or stipend for participating in training; she said that she felt to be most successful this needed to occur on the individual's own initiative and own time, but supported by the agency/provider they work for.

Commissioner Sablan suggested that the total be increased to \$500,000. He said he would like to see some funds used to bring training to the rural communities, hopefully in a group

setting. He also said that he felt this was a good project for an aggressive media campaign, that the small grants can bring us as much, if not more, publicity than the large grants.

Commissioner Karian asked for assurance that the inclusion of children with disabilities in quality childcare programs would be addressed and the community's level of awareness be increased in this area.

Public Comment: Marilyn Moore, Fresno City College, stated, in regard to the staff development issue, that there would be a significant amount of overlap between this Mini-Grant program and the C.A.R.E.S. program. She said that perhaps it does make good sense to put the two programs together somehow; she feels that some of the concerns expressed about training are addressed in the C.A.R.E.S. program.

Hugo Morales, Radio Bilingue, stated that anything that could be done to increase or augment the low wages paid to childcare providers or to help stop the high turnover would be an improvement over current situation. He requested that the cultural and linguistic diversity of Fresno County be a top consideration when the program is ultimately developed and approved.

Sally Rowden, Fresno County Association for the Education of Young Children, commented that many people did not apply for the education or training element of the Mini-Grant program because they were not aware of its' availability. She also asked whether training included only specified training or if furthering education was included. Commissioners Parry and Carozza responded they would want to encourage the improvement of care, and if that meant education, training that could be provided or brought to CCPs, participation in professional groups, and the encouragement of mainstreaming of all those issues.

Joy Grado, Marjaree Mason Center, suggested that in order to encourage CCPs to attend that trainings be offered evenings and weekends. She also supported Commissioner Sablan's suggestion of having the training in group settings at various locations in the county.

Discussion: Commissioner Parry suggested approving the concept provided there is integration with the C.A.R.E.S. project training option. Rogers stated that the actual application will be brought to the Commission for approval at the next meeting, and the additional elements discussed can be included in the application.

Rogers suggested that staff return with the application and the following changes to the program:

- Increase in dollar amount not to exceed \$500,000 for the total program.
- Commissioner Karian suggested increasing the individual grant amount available to the CCPs but base their request on the self-assessment, based on need, up to \$5,000. Rogers stated that the consensus of childcare experts in the community was that \$2,000 was an appropriate figure for these grants.
- Increase in grants for inclusion of training component.

6. Approve Proposal and authorize staff to negotiate agreement with the Fresno County Child Care Local Planning Council to be the Program Administrator for the Fresno County C.A.R.E.S. Program.

Director Gordon reviewed the allocation by the Commission of \$2 million, with an additional 25% match (\$500,000) from the State Commission, for developing a plan for training incentives for childcare providers. At the Commission's request, staff is presenting a draft proposal and budget for this project.

Rogers reviewed the background for the "Retention Incentives for Early Care and Education Providers" Initiative from the State Commission, including working with the Fresno County Child Care Local Planning Council (LPC) to develop a countywide program, in coordination with AB 212 funding from the state, in Fresno County. The LPC Training and Task Team has developed a program to be called "Compensation and Retention Encourage Stability" (C.A.R.E.S.). The guidelines developed include the guidelines for both AB 212 funding and the State Commission's guidelines for the Retention Incentives Initiative. Since the LPC is mandated by the State Dept. of Education to administer the AB 212 program, Commission staff recommends that the LPC also be the administrator for the Commission's portion of the program. The LPC scope of work will include development of an application form, eligibility instruments, review process and participant agreement/contract; publicizing the program in urban and rural areas; maintain on-going communication with applicants; development of a monitoring process to evaluate applicants' progress toward completion of requirements; and implementing data collection to provide a comprehensive picture of the provider community. The draft budget includes \$326,967 for administrative costs; \$452,000 for demonstration and training (sub-contract to Fresno City College), and \$1.7 million for direct provider stipends (plus \$365,647 from AB 212 funds). The Fresno County Office of Education will be responsible for doing all of the verification of provider's classes, transcripts, etc., and will be the issuer of all funds.

Staff requests approval to continue to negotiate a contract with the LPC, a public entity, to be brought back to the Commission for final approval at the January 2002 meeting.

Discussion: Commissioner Carozza asked the reason for the statement in the "Draft Guidelines: "Staff retention activities funded by these dollars should be selected in such a way that they are not dependent upon ongoing funding." He questioned the term "retention" because he does not see any guarantee that the providers receiving funding would stay to continue to provide services. Rogers responded that this referred to AB 212 funds. Carozza questioned what guarantees were in the program to assure retention; the opportunity for better pay is being improved with education, but how do Commission funds impact retention. Rogers responded that as part of the guidelines to receive stipends, the provider must remain with their current employer for at least a year after receiving a stipend and in order to continue with eligibility on a year-round basis, they must remain with the same employer and complete a professional development plan. Carozza asked about penalties if they fail to fulfill their program; Rogers responded there was nothing except they would no longer receive stipends from the program.

Public Comment: Peg Mericle, Dean, Social Sciences Dept., Fresno City College, stated that the draft proposal of FCC's training scope of work is just that, a "draft" – it has not been reviewed by anyone with authority to agree to the proposal at FCC. Rogers stated that this was part of the contract negotiations staff would pursue; Carozza asked how much, if any, changes would be anticipated. Marilyn Moore, FCC, stated that the draft included was included just as a "plan of possibilities" so it is not set in concrete at this time. Mericle stated that one piece that is problematic for FCC is that it would be necessary to work in collaboration with another entity because there is no space at FCC for the "early care and resource center" described in the proposal; the proposed budget does include this collaboration.

Mary Arriaga, Coordinator, LPC, stated that the LPC proposal is also a draft and has not been approved by the LPC; this will take place at next LPC meeting.

Gordon stated that as he sees the situation, staff is asking for Commission agreement on the scope of work and that LPC is the entity with which the Commission negotiates to administer Commission funds, and the pieces will come together in a contract presented to the Commission for approval in January.

Chairman Waterston expressed his concerns that the proposal seems too vague to him for any Commission action at this time.

Commissioner Sablan asked about whether the scope of work will include specific components to reach the outlying areas in the county. Moore responded that the scope of work involves building on existing programs, collaboration in funding, and building support for students to be able to handle cost of textbooks and registration fees, and for this to occur at all of the community college campuses in Fresno County (West Hills, Reedley and Fresno City). In terms of outreach, Moore stated personnel at all 3 college campuses are accustomed to dealing with concerns in delivery of services – “on site” in the field (not on campus), Spanish only classes, classes with bilingual support, evening and weekend classes. She feels that the proposed plan does cover innovative scheduling and format, student support, opportunities for professional development and cultural awareness and sensitivity, and programming for providers throughout the county. Sablan asked about the possibility of including “distance learning” components for outlying areas.

Commissioners Carozza and Waterston expressed concern about the tentative nature of the proposals. Rogers stated that if the Commission approves the concept for the program, then staff will continue to negotiate a contract with the other agencies. Commission Counsel Holley Perez stated she felt that staff is asking for the ability to pursue a program concept rather than actually negotiate an agreement. She recommended that any approval given by the Commission be only to pursue this type of program with these agencies, with specific scope(s) of work come back to the Commission for approval prior to the negotiation of a contract.

Vickie Hoyle, Fresno County EOC, questioned the process of determining the subcontractor (FCC) and whether this should be a competitive bid process. Rogers stated that since FCC is already providing the training and is a government agency, competitive bidding is not required. Perez stated that because FCC is a governmental agency, competitive bidding is not required. Director Gordon stated the Commission would be contracting with the LPC and they, in turn, would subcontract with the best provider they could find to carry out the training component of this program. Arriaga stated that the Fresno County Office of Education is the legal entity for the LPC, which is mandated to implement AB 212.

Commissioner Parry suggested that staff be directed to continue to pursue this program concept. Commissioner Sablan asked about the LPC’s mandate; Rogers responded that the mandate to LPC is for AB212 funds and in order to make this program into a seamless delivery system, staff is recommending that LPC also administer the Commission’s funds for this program.

Commissioner Parry suggested that the draft proposal be approved and that the Commission authorize staff to take the next step to pursue the program. Perez stated that the scope of work is not specific enough at this time to go forward to negotiate an agreement. The Commission is directing staff to continue to pursue the program to finalize the actual scope of work and then bring that back for approval to negotiate an agreement. Rogers asked for additional specific needs of the Commission to move this project forward. Chairman Waterston directed staff to take the proposals back to the other agencies that need to approve them and bring back to the Commission the proposals as approved by those agencies.

Commissioner Parry (Carozza second) moved that the draft proposal be approved and that the Commission authorize staff to take the next step to pursue development of the program. Motion approved unanimously.

7. Discuss Establishment of Commission Advisory Committees

Director Gordon stated that this concept has been under discussion for over a year, and something that Commissioner Parry asked staff to bring back formally for discussion so that we can narrow down specifically what the Commission wants in advisory committees. Staff has researched what other County Commissions have in the way of advisory committees and Commissioner Parry met and discussed with staff the different types of committee possibilities for Fresno County. Staff is presenting some recommendations as a discussion starting point, hoping to reach some consensus and then bring back a specific proposal to formalize some advisory committees, with the intent is that there would be at least one Commissioner on each committee established.

Commissioner Parry stated that in discussions with staff, the consensus was that the suggested committees were not seen as "carved in stone" but a starting point for discussion.

Commissioner McIntyre asked about the why the Civic Engagement Committee was given the specific task to include parent involvement, and not have that as a component of all committees. Director Gordon said parents would be encouraged to participate in all committees but in order to ensure full engagement of parents, making the specific involvement for this committee include parents would ensure that engagement.

Commissioner Parry stated from her standpoint that because of some of the special issues in getting parents involved with what is taking place, at least initially, it would be good to have a specific way to explore and develop methods for involving parents.

Perez directed the Commission's attention to the proposed Executive Committee and expressed her concerns of that committee because the Children & Families Act legislation states that County Commissions "shall establish one or more advisory committees to provide technical and professional expertise and support for any purposes that will be beneficial in accomplishing the purposes of this) act." The Executive Committee, as suggested in structure, is simply a portion of the Commission with the addition of the Executive Director and does not propose to have any expertise in technical or professional assistance. Director Gordon stated that the information from other County Commissions determined that a good portion of them did have an Executive Committee, with it's main purpose to be to meet with the Executive Director prior to Commission meetings for review of the agenda, and perhaps could be construed as "technical assistance" to the Executive Director and should not be considered an "advisory" committee in the same context as the other committees are "advisory". Gordon offered to check with the State Commission's and Attorney General's offices about this concern.

Public Comment: A question was asked about whether meetings of the committees, including the Executive Committee, would be open to the public. The public was assured that all meetings would conform to the Brown Act.

Discussion: Commissioner Carozza asked for clarification from the Attorney General to the scope of duties the Executive Committee could provide to the Commission. He also asked for clarification on the difference between the Planning & Program Committee and the Policy & Procedures Committee. He also said he did not see an Evaluation Committee and felt that it is a key component. He also stated he was not sure that the Fiscal Impact statement for this agenda item was correct; he wanted to make sure that the greatest amount of flexibility was made for meeting times, etc., (i.e., not all held during the normal work day), and felt there would be more of a fiscal impact when additional flexibility was incorporated.

8. Administrative Items

8a. Approve 2002 Meeting Calendar

Director Gordon stated that except for the January meeting, all meetings will continue on the first Wednesday of each month; the January meeting will be on the second Wednesday since the first Wednesday is the day after New Years.

Commissioner Carozza (McIntyre second) moved approval of the meeting calendar for 2002 as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

8b. Update on Investment Analysis

Director Gordon stated that the investment advisor is making progress. A full report will be made in January.

8c. Update on School Readiness Initiative

Director Gordon stated that the consultant hired is working continuously with staff and the three schools identified as meeting all the criteria for Phase I: Mayfair and Burroughs Elementary, in Fresno Unified, and Del Rey Elementary in Sanger Unified. Proposals are being developed with, at a minimum, drafts to be presented to the Commission at the January meeting, and completed proposals ready to submit to the State Commission by the January 15, 2002.

Public Comment: Dennis DuCharme, Laton Unified School Dist., asked about a timeline for Phase II applications for the Initiative. Rogers responded that Laton Unified was the only district to date to contact the Commission about participating in Phase II, and that as soon as the Phase I applications were submitted, work would begin with schools on Phase II which has an application deadline of March 15, 2002.

Vickie Hoyle, FCEOC, asked about the schools participating in Phase I, wondering what happened to Del Rey and Parlier. Rogers responded that Del Rey Elementary is the school from Sanger Unified, and that after discussions with Parlier, they felt they were not ready for Phase I.

9. Public Comment

None.

10. Announcements

Director Gordon announced he attended the national Zero to Three Conference the end of November on a scholarship from the State CFC. He found it to be very educational. He hopes that the contacts made there will allow Fresno County to benefit from some of the training available in the field.

Commissioner Parry asked if anyone had information about the proposed cuts in Category 3 subsidized childcare.

Commissioner Carozza requested that anyone hearing suggestions that Prop. 10 be looked at for funding of programs being cut by other government agencies to advise the Executive Director of these comments.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 4:25 p.m.